

What Works Clearinghouse



Character Education

September 14, 2006

Too Good for Drugs™

Program description

Too Good for Drugs™ is designed to promote life skills, character values, resistance skills to negative peer influence, and resistance to the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. The program, which targets elementary and middle school students, is based on classroom discussions and structured activities that center on interactive learning and skill-building exercises.

Students engage in role-play and cooperative learning games and are encouraged to apply the skills to different contexts. *Too Good for Drugs™* also includes the optional elements of parental and community involvement. Two related programs are addressed in the intervention reports on [Too Good for Drugs and Violence](#) (high school) and [Too Good for Violence](#) (K–8).

Research

Two studies of *Too Good for Drugs™* met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. These studies, which included nearly 2,500 students in grades 3, 4, and 6, attending

12 elementary and middle schools in Florida, examined results on students' behavior and knowledge, attitudes, and values.¹

Effectiveness

Too Good for Drugs™ was found to have potentially positive effects on students' behavior and no discernible effects on students' knowledge, attitudes, and values.

	Behavior	Knowledge, attitudes, and values	Academic achievement
Rating of effectiveness	Potentially positive effects	No discernible effects	Not reported
Improvement index ²	Average: +10 percentile points Range: 0 to +17 percentile points	Average: +7 percentile points Range: +3 to +11 percentile points	Not reported

1. The evidence presented in this report is based on the available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.

2. These numbers show the average and range of improvement indices for all findings across the two studies.

Additional program information

Developer and contact

Mendez Foundation. 601 S. Magnolia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33606.
Web: www.mendezfoundation.org. Telephone: 800-750-0986.

Scope of use

Too Good for Drugs™ (K–8) was first developed in Hillsborough County (Tampa), Florida in 1978. The middle school program was revised in 1995.³ *Too Good for Drugs*™ and its companion programs (*Too Good for Violence* and *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*) have been implemented in more than 2,500 districts in more than 48 states in rural, urban, and suburban communities with African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Caucasian student populations and across diverse socioeconomic groups. *Too Good for Drugs*™ may have changed since the studies were conducted. The WWC recommends asking the developer for information about the most current version of this curriculum and taking into account that student demographics and school context may affect outcomes.

Teaching

Too Good for Drugs™ was included in the character education review because the program addresses several character traits that are infused into most of the lessons. *Too Good for Drugs*™ consists of 10 lessons at each grade level lasting 30–45 minutes per lesson. All lessons are scripted and intended to be taught by trained teachers or program instructors (off-site educators). Lessons include information about the frequency of drug use among American youth and the harmful effects of drug use. Instructional strategies cover goal setting and decisionmaking skills, prosocial skills, resistance to negative peer influence skills, and interpersonal

skills. Core values such as respect for self and others, empathic responding, and responsibility are integrated into the lessons. Cooperative learning activities, role-play, and skill-building methods reinforce positive behaviors and skills and encourage students to apply these behaviors and skills in other contexts.

The developer provides such teacher resources as grade-level kits that include scripted curricula, 50 student workbooks, measurable objectives, evaluation tools, lesson extenders, and tips for teaching the program. According to the developer, the program is school-based but also includes such optional community and parental involvement components as parent newsletters and interactive family materials as well as information on holding parent information sessions.

Cost

The cost of materials for a classroom, including the curriculum, 50 student workbooks, teaching materials such as puppets and posters, teaching tips, and evaluation tools, ranges from \$100 to \$130 depending on the grade level.

Teachers are encouraged to attend an on-site or regional curriculum training workshop held by the developer. The cost per day of a regional training workshop is \$300 a person for curriculum training and \$400 a person for train the trainer sessions. The cost of the regional training is reduced to \$850 if the participant attends all three days of training. The cost per day of an on-site training workshop, which can train groups of 15 to 50 participants, is \$1,500 plus travel for curriculum training and \$225 a person for train the trainer sessions. The developer states that smaller school districts may collaborate with nearby districts to share the cost of on-site training.

Research

Two studies reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of *Too Good for Drugs*™. Both studies (Bacon, 2000; Bacon, 2003) were randomized controlled trials that met WWC evidence standards. Both studies focused on *Too Good for Drugs*™ implemented in classrooms rather than as a schoolwide intervention.

The Bacon (2000) study investigated the program effects on middle school students and included more than 1,300 sixth-grade students attending six middle schools in one large school district in Florida. This study compared outcomes for students participating in a *Too Good for Drugs*™ curriculum with

3. The revised middle school curriculum is also known as *Too Good for Drugs II*.

Research (continued)

outcomes for students in classes that did not use a character education curriculum.

The Bacon (2003) study investigated the program effects on elementary school students and included more than 1,100 third- and fourth-grade students attending six elementary schools in

one school district in Florida. This study compared outcomes for students participating in a *Too Good for Drugs*™ curriculum with outcomes for students in classes that did not use a character education curriculum.

Effectiveness Findings

The WWC review of character education addresses student outcomes in three domains: behavior; knowledge, attitudes, and values; and academic achievement.

Behavior. Bacon (2003) found statistically significant differences favoring the intervention group on all three subscales (personal and social skills, prosocial behavior, and inappropriate behavior) four months after the end of the program.⁴ Although, as calculated by the WWC, none of these outcomes—individually or averaged—were found to be statistically significant the average effect size was large enough to be considered substantively important (at least 0.25).

Knowledge, attitudes, and values. Bacon (2000) reported statistically significant differences favoring the intervention group on three outcomes (resistance skills, prosocial peer group, and locus of control) four months after the end of the program. But none of these outcomes were found to be statistically significant as calculated by the WWC. The average effect size was neither statistically significant nor substantively important.

Bacon (2003) reported statistically significant differences in student perceptions favoring the intervention group on one of the five outcomes (goal setting and decisionmaking) four months after the end of the program. This effect was not found to be statistically significant as calculated by the WWC. The average effect size was neither statistically significant nor substantively important.

Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates interventions as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings (as calculated by the WWC), the size of the differences between participants in the intervention condition and the comparison condition, and the consistency of the findings across studies (see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#)).

The WWC found *Too Good for Drugs*™ to have potentially positive effects on behavior and no discernible effects on knowledge, attitudes, and values

Improvement index

For each outcome domain, the WWC computed an improvement index based on the average effect size (see the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#)). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition versus the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is entirely based

on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or analysis. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results. The average improvement index for behavior is +10 percentile points, with a range of 0 to +17 percentile points across findings. The average improvement index for knowledge, attitudes, and values is +7 percentile points, with a range of +3 to +11 percentile points across findings.

4. The level of statistical significance was calculated by the WWC and, where necessary, corrects for clustering within classrooms or schools, and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation, see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). See the [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#) for the formulas the WWC used to calculate the statistical significance. In the case of the *Too Good for Drugs*™ report, corrections for clustering and multiple comparisons were needed.

The WWC found *Too Good for Drugs™* to have potentially positive effects on behavior and no discernible effects on knowledge, attitudes, and values (continued)

Summary

The WWC reviewed two studies on *Too Good for Drugs™*. Both studies (Bacon, 2000; Bacon, 2003) were randomized controlled trials that met WWC evidence standards. Only one study (Bacon, 2003) examined student outcomes in the behavior domain. The average effect size across all behavior outcomes examined in this study was substantively important but not statistically significant. So the WWC rated the program as having potentially positive effects in the behavior domain. Both studies reviewed for *Too Good for Drugs™* examined student outcomes in the knowledge,

attitudes, and values domain. When the WWC aggregated the results across all outcomes in this domain in each of the studies, the domain average effect size in each of the studies was neither statistically significant nor substantively important. In addition, none of the individual findings was statistically significant, as calculated by the WWC. So the WWC rated the program as having no discernible effects on knowledge, attitudes, and values. Character education, an evolving field, is beginning to establish a research base. The evidence presented in this report is limited and may change as new research emerges.

References

Met WWC evidence standards

Bacon, T. P. (2000). The effects of the Too Good for Drugs prevention program on students' substance use intentions and risk and protective factors. *Florida Educational Research Council, Inc., Research Bulletin*, 31(3 & 4), 1–25.

Bacon, T. P. (2003). Technical report: Evaluation of the Too Good for Drugs Elementary School Prevention Program. A report produced for Florida Department of Education Department of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Tallahassee, FL. Available from: The Mendez Foundation, 601 S. Magnolia Avenue, Tampa, FL 33606.

For more information about specific studies and WWC calculations, please see the [WWC Too Good for Drugs™ Technical Appendices](#).